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WILSON DOCTRINE

How the Speech of President Wilson at Mobile, Ala., Has Been Interpreted by the Latin-American Countries

BY

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Ex-President of Honduras, C. A.

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EXTRACT OF THE SPEECH

U. S. A.

"The future, ladies and gentlemen, is going to be very different for this hemisphere from the past. These States lying to the south of us, which have always been our neighbors, will now be drawn closer to us by innumerable ties, and, I hope, chief of all, by the tie of a common understanding of each other. Interest does not tie nations together. It sometimes separates them.

"We must prove ourselves their friends and champions, upon terms of equality and honor. You cannot be friends upon any other terms than upon the terms of equality. You cannot be friends at all except upon the terms of honor. We must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interest whether it squares with our own interest or not.

"I want to take this occasion to say that the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest.

"Our real relationship with the rest of America is, the relationship of a family of mankind devoted to the development of true constitutional liberty. America is a name which sounds in the ears of men everywhere as a synonym with individual opportunity because a synonym of individual liberty. I would rather belong to a poor nation that was free than to a rich nation that had ceased to be in love with liberty.

"There is one peculiarity about the history of the Latin American states which I am sure they are keenly aware of. You hear of 'concession' to foreign capitalists in Latin America. You do not hear of concession to foreign capitalists in the United States. They are not granted concessions. They are invited to make investments. The work is ours, though they are welcome to invest in it. We do not ask them to supply the capital and do the work. It is an invitation, not a privilege; and states that are obliged, because their territory does not lie within the main field of modern enterprise and action, to grant concessions, are in this condition, that foreign interests are apt to dominate their domestic affairs: a condition of affairs always dangerous and apt to become intolerable. What these states are going to see, therefore, is an emancipation from the subordination which has been inevitable, to foreign enterprise and an assertion of the splendid character which, in spite of these difficulties, they have again and again, been able to demonstrate. The dignity, the courage, the self-possession, the self-respect of the Latin American States, their achievements in the face of all these adverse circumstances, deserve nothing but the admira-

tion and applause of the world. They have had harder bargains driven with then in the matter of loans than any other peoples in the world. Interest has been exacted of them that was not exacted of anybody else, because the risk was said to be greater; and then securities were taken that destroyed the risk, an admirable arrangement for those who were forcing the terms. I rejoice in nothing so much as in the prospect that they will now be emancipated from these conditions, and we ought to be the first to take part in assisting in that emancipation.

"We have seen material interests threaten constitutional freedom in the United States. Therefore, we will now know how to sympathize with those in the rest of America who have to contend with such powers not only within their borders but from outside their borders also. I know what the response of the thought and heart of America will be to the programme I have outlined, because America was created to realize a programme like that.

"In emphasizing the points which must unite us in sympathy and in spiritual interest with the Latin American peoples, we are only emphasizing the points of our own life, and we should prove ourselves untrue to our own traditions if we proved ourselves untrue friends to them. Do not think, therefore, gentlemen, that the questions of the day are mere questions of policy and diplomacy. They are shot through with the principles of life. We dare not turn from the principles that morality, and not expediency, is the thing that must guide us, and that we will never condone iniquity because it is most convenient to do so.

"It seems to me that this is a day of infinite hope, of confidence in a future greater than the past has been."

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The thought and the heart of America have answered President Wilson. With unanimous and enthusiastic voice, it has applauded the programme made public by President Wilson in the speech delivered on October 26th, 1913, at Mobile, Alabama, of which we have copied above, the extracts that seemed to us of greater interest for the object we have in view. Mr. Wilson addresses the people of America in his own name and that of the United States Government invoking the friendship, and fraternity of this hemisphere and treating the other countries as equals. He does not offer, as was formerly offered them, or tried to impose on them, a protection humiliating to their pride, and offensive to their sovereignty, that has made odious to the weak nations of this continent the doctrine that

the illustrious President Monroe proclaimed for their own benefit. President Wilson proposes to make the inhabitants of this vast continent regain confidence in possibility of living in accord, and that "we shall presently come upon these great heights where there shines, unobstructed, the light of the justice of God".

We intend to comment on that speech, applying to it the criterions, with which the peoples of the South have interpreted it, especially in Central America; and deducting the logical consequences that should be deducted from the beautiful expressions contained in that historical document, which means the proclamation of a new doctrine of International Law for America, that comes to take the place of the discredited Monroe Doctrine, or if it is preferred so, that comes to re-establish it in its original purity, with the modifications imposed by changed times and the advance of civilization.

When President Monroe made his famous declaration, "America for the Americans", his purpose was to safeguard the existence of the new-born Latin American nationalities and the stability of their democratic institutions. He wanted to make impossible any conquest by the monarchies of Europe that were trying to coalesce to restore colonial government in America. But he did not intend to reserve for his own country the right that he denied to the nations of the old world, and he could not conceive that the United States would assume and use the right of conquest in any part of American territory.

But there came a day in which they did it. The discovery of gold in California, and the settling of Americans in Texas, created foreign *material interests* that overcome *morality and justice.* On one pretext or another, war was declared. The neighboring territory was unpopulated, and was inhabited mainly by tribes of nomad Indians. The invaders did not find any resistance in the inhabitants of the land that they afterward annexed, nor to keep the conquered territory. The resistance made by the Mexican nation was not great, on account of the backward state of the country, and also on account of the exhaustion produced by constant civil wars. Mexico lost, consequently, on being vanquished,

more than half of its territory; and since then there has been instilled in the hearts of the Mexicans the fear of future invasions and the natural rancor against the conquerors, a feeling that has not disappeared in nearly seventy years, being transmitted to three generations, although some times it has been dulled by the influence of commerce and immigration, and with the inversion in Mexican soil of over one thousand millions of American capital in all sorts of enterprises. Since then the Monroe Doctrine instead of being considered as a guarantee of independence by the Latin American countries, was regarded as a menace to their very existence.

Lately the Spanish War, begun in the name of Humanity and civilization, ended in material gains for the United States, with the acquisition of Porto Rico and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba; and that induced Latin America to believe that this country was still seeking new territorial conquests, which was a new source of discredit for the Monroe Doctrine.

Later, in 1904, the President declared that the United States had the right to assume the role of international police in Latin America; and so deeply wounded the pride of the other nations, that the doctrine invoked in that declaration was made odious, and still more, this added to the resentment produced by the means employed to acquire the Panama Canal Zone, violating the treaty with Colombia, and afterwards the establishment of an economic protectorate in Santo Domingo, that has produced the complete ruin of that country.

A secretary of State, later, destroyed the fruits of the patient labors of conciliation of the two races initiated by his predecessor, Mr. Blaine, founder of Pan-Americanism, and further advanced by another, Mr. Root, when proclaimed as the policy of this government towards Latin America the "Dollar Diplomacy"; and in accordance with it, tried to impose on the various Central American countries, loans and other ruinous negotiations based on the Dominican plan, that happily were rejected, with the exception of Nicaragua, where the government committing real high treason, and with a perfect knowledge that the American Senate was opposed to that policy, submitted itself to the will of the State Department. The

result has been, that to protect supposed American interest, to protect an option of buying the national railroads and navy at a ridiculously low price, and may be for reasons of a worst kind, that we leave for others to make public; American marines were landed, to uphold the government of the traitors to their country and their race, and to fight the Nicaraguans defending the honor, the dignity and the autonomy of their country. After their easy triumph, these marines occupied and still occupy the White House at Managua, hoisting daily in that mansion the flag of the Stars and Stripes, that should be only a symbol of the liberty of these countries, and maintaining with that permanent affront, the indignation of public sentiment in the Latin American peoples.

All that has also been done while invoking the Monroe Doctrine. Such precedents have produced a state of public opinion, that the simple mention of that historical doctrine in regard to the international relations between this country and others of this continent, makes them consider it as an offense to their dignity and its sovereignty, and at the same time as a menace to their independence and other vital interests. Unquestionally President Wilson understood it to be so; and on that account, taking advantage of the presence at Mobile of the representatives of the Latin American Republics for the meeting of the Commercial Congress of the South, offered then the olive branch as a token of peace, and enunciated in the above quoted speech a new doctrine, that conveys the reprobation of all the arbitrary amplifications and interpretations that have been added to the original Monroe Doctrine, and of all the abuses that have been committed under it, while at the same time recognizes the duty of repairing the harm done as far as possible.

The new doctrine, according to the intention of its author, will have as a basis, the legal equality of all the sovereign nations of this continent, their mutual understanding, that will foment real friendship, having as a basis honor, and as an end justice. It will mean that America is for the Americans, but in the sense that this continent shall not be considered as the African con-

tinent, a field where the Powers have disputed the share that each of them wants, conquest being barred from it, even if it is only *a foot of territory,* for the nations of the old continent as well as for those of the new world; and it will mean that *America is for mankind,* a field destined to the free exercise of *individual activity* a synonym of *individual* liberty. It will mean that America must tend to *emancipate itself from subordination to material interest, especially foreign interest,* and to accomplish that end, the United States will help those *nations less favored by fortune;* the most efficacious means being that its Department of State, should give a good example to the world powers, by not sustaining diplomatically any unjust or immoderate claim, refusing even to accept it as a basis of discussion without a previous and conscientious study, and that it will never give the form of ultimatum to the violent exactions that were used formerly on account of that kind of claims; and as a consequence of that policy, America will not permit other nations the same privileges.

That new doctrine should be named as we have named at the head of this article, the WILSON DOCTRINE; but as a tribute to the memory of its generous creator of the original doctrine, it should be called the Monroe Wilson Doctrine. With that distinction it will be separated from the counterfeits that have been made of the Monroe Doctrine, and thus it will be well received by Latin America; until it is accepted as a principle of International Law in America, either by inserting it in special treaties or by having it accepted in the next Pan-American Conference that will take place at Santiago de Chile. The legal points that it will embrace are well defined in the President's speech, and it only remains to give them the concrete form of a diplomatic document.

When that is accomplished there will exist in America an equilibrium greater than that of Europe, because it will be based on the accord and good understanding of all the nations of this continent; and in that concert of nations the United States will have always the greater influence, an influence that attracts instead of repels because it does not depress or degrade those that accept it.

And then, American capital, immigration, industries and commerce will be welcomed again in the Latin American countries.

President Wilson whilst that day arrives can make that doctrine popular, by the most efficacious means; by fulfilling and practising the duties that it imposes on his country. Latin America has lost faith in platforms and the speeches of candidates, in proclamations of aspirants for power, because those promises nearly in every case are not fulfilled. It has lost faith in President's messages and speeches, because they regularly say the contrary of what they think, or do the contrary of what they say. But down there they have a high opinion of the English seriousness, and considering the North Americans as sons of the English, they attribute to them that virtue also. On that account, and for his honorable personal antecedents, they place their faith in President Wilson, and believe that he will make good his promises. And he could do it because he is in accord with the legislature power, and counts especially with the good will of the Senate, which has manifested itself, more than once in favor of a policy of justice towards Latin America. Besides, the ideals proclaimed in Mr. Wilson's speech, cannot be considered as rhetorical fireworks, because that speech was premeditated. What he said must be believed it was said to remove the bad impression caused recently by the convention for a protectorate, entered into by the Department of State with the government of Nicaragua, and the worst impression created by the declaration of the same Department, about its intention of exceeding that protectorate to the other Central American Republics, and generally to all the countries near the Panama Canal. Latin America protested unanimously against such a project; and it is easily understood, that President Wilson should have wished to demonstrate that if there was a mistake made in conceiving that plan, there was no bad faith on the part of this government, and that there existed no hostility towards those countries. We expect that he will prove that, not only by abandoning such purposes, of greater importance to America than all the others entertained by

previous administrations; and also by righting the wrongs previously done. Of all this we will talk in an extensive form hereafter.

We want to say now, that we consider a protectorate as the worst calamity that may befall a nation, even worse than the total loss of independence. Under that system, the protector is the one that really governs and administers, without any responsibility, notwithstanding the many errors which it will necessarily incur, for lack of knowledge of the habits, character, and needs of the protected country. For the protector the best executive is the most submissive to his orders, whether it is a tyrant or a thief, even it is hated by the people; and frequently it cannot be aware of its bad traits, because it governs and administers through agents, that to take personal advantage of the vices of the protected government, report always in its favor. For that reason it must not seem strange if we affirm that in Central America, from the high-minded man to the most ignorant person, if they were put to the necessity of choosing between the protectorate of the United States and annexation to this country, they would not hesitate to answer: "We do not desire or accept any of the two extremes: We want our absolute independence, as we had it from our fathers, and as we want to transmit it to our sons; and to defend it we would offer our lives; but if by force you impose on us to choose, we prefer annexation, because in that way we would enjoy the benefit of the American laws and institutions and we would have the protection of its judiciary." Because President Wilson made no mistake in recognizing the dignity, the courage, and the splendid character of those peoples. They love their country, even if it is weak and small, as much as the North Americans love their own big and strong, or more precisely, because it is small and weak. There had never been traitors in those countries, and although unfortunately treason has shown its hateful face, it is execrated by all the Central American peoples, and by all America, and we yet hope that the treason shall not be consummated.

Yes, we have confidence that the day of justice, that the day of atonement for the offenses and harm done by this country to others of America, is near. We want to

believe, we have the right and the duty to believe, that very soon the words of the President of the United States will be accomplished facts, that he will fulfill his promises.

With such a confidence we do not hestitate to show the logical consequences that the Central American countries and generally those of Latin America, most expect from the speech we are considering, and we will review the countries that have been directly affected by the mistaken policy formerly observed towards Latin America.

MEXICO.

The Mexican situation affects to a great extent Central America, not only on account of the community of race, but because the consequences its outcome may produce for those countries. For more than three years civil war has been tearing to pieces that country, formerly so prosperous, to-day so unhappy. And as yet none can predict when it will end, nor the complications that may arise.

We do not care to discuss the responsibility that the United States may have in that war, nor do we care to affirm that the Government of the United States fomented it at the beginning, although the fact that it provoked a short time before a revolution in Nicaragua and prior to that or simultaneous movements in Honduras, would relieve us from the burden of proof. But we believe that the revolution in Mexico was undoubtedly promoted by persons in accord with the material interests of a few Americans, and to promote those interests all other American interests belonging to the majority of Americans resident in that country were sacrificed as well as the permanent interests of this country. The war affects the interests of the whole world, and especially those of the United States on account of territorial proximity and because this country has more capital invested in Mexico than all the other countries together.

If Mexican patriotism does not awaken to put an end to the strife at an early date, and every one does not sacrifice personal ambition and political hatred, it is to be feared that the war will provoke foreign intervention.

President Wilson has proved that he does not want his country to intervene, because he must have seen clearly that it would be the greatest calamity that could befall both countries. It would cost the United States tens of thousands of men and hundreds of millions of dollars, besides entailing the necessity of taking from their usual labor at least 200,000 men to form an invading army. Also he must have seen that the end of the struggle would be the absorption of Mexico. The President has said: "The United States will not seek to acquire a single foot of territory by conquest"; but it would be extremely difficult for him to maintain his pledged word. In case of war the leader who declares it may know how it will begin, and his aim may be entirely disinterested or altruistic, but the same leader cannot foresee how it will end or what the consequences may be. Surely he will fear that, in view of the immense sacrifices in blood and money that would ensue, public opinion would manifest itself in favor of absolute conquest as a compensation and as a guarantee that there would not be a repetition of the case. Nor would the demand of the public end there. Once the United States was converted into a conquering nation, it would want at once, without forfeiting future aspirations, to extend the frontiers of this country to the extreme limits of the Isthmus of Panama on the other side of the canal.

There may be some Mexicans and Central Americans that will blame us for uttering this bitter truth, fearing that it is equivalent to showing the way that should be followed by this country; but if they do, it will be because they have not thought that the idea is not exclusively our own; that because it has not been written before to our knowledge, does not signify that it has not existed, and that, instead of keeping silent, it is better to point out the peril, so that it may be avoided. The danger is just as great for the possible conqueror as for the countries that would be the victims. And if President Wilson has expressed himself so energetically against any kind of conquest, it must have been because he has foreseen the great harm that such a move would do to his country.

To maintain a conquest over that extensive territory, and over 20,000,000 of men of Indian-Spanish race, it would be necessary to keep there an army of no less than 150,000 soldiers and the greater part of the American navy watching more than 30 of the principal ports, perhaps for tens of years; and, besides, the United States would have to employ constantly such violent repressive measures that it would make impossible any kind of harmony between the conquering and the conquered races. It would provoke the hatred and lack of confidence of all the other nations of this continent and of the European nations that have colonies in America. The new territory thus acquired would keep the door, to-day closed, open for any enemy of the United States; because conquest causes a loss of national honor among the vanquished people, producing instead a hatred against the conquerors, in which case the inhabitants would receive with open arms any new invaders, even if they were sure that they were going to lose in the exchange.

But the danger for the United States would go further. Its free institutions exist because there is not a permanent army, and consequently, militarism, the great enemy of liberty wherever it exists, has not been developed in this country. War would give a great prestige to many chiefs of the invading army, and the military occupancy of the conquered country would keep alive their prestige. Then the merits of the warrior and not the civil virtues would be the means to reach the high offices, because the immorality of conquest would demoralize and corrupt the Anglo-Saxon people as it demoralized and corrupted the Roman people.

And the consequences of that grave error may go still further. History teaches us that all great empires have ended in dissolution. This country has been saved by the admirable form of government it created for itself, but there is no denying that it contains the germ of at least three nationalities, the North, the South and the West. Any happening, however minor its nature, may cause another crisis like the five years' war. The date of that crisis may be hastened by the conquest of 20,000,000 of inhabitants of an alien race more easily assimilable to the

Southern and the South Western States, because the conquerors could not entertain the delusion that they could destroy or absorb so many human beings. And that might be the beginning of the end of the glorious existence of the nation, which to-day is the wonder of the world under the name of the United States of America.

And all that for what? For the self satisfaction of calling themselves the owners of almost half a continent. But being compelled to accomplish the second conquest, of the land that they would have to work, of the food they would have to eat, of the water they would have to drink, even of the air they would breath, because they would fear to find in everything, the watchful hate of the vanquished, who would contest inch by inch the possession of everything that was formerly theirs. And all that when, without exposing themselves to so many dangers and risks, without committing injustice, "that should never be committed because it was convenient", they may enjoy all the advantages offered as brothers by those peoples to all foreigners, advantages of which the American citizens get the last part, because the proximity of those countries and their knowledge of the land, permits them to make the most profitable inversion of capital.

For that very reason we believe that there will not be any armed intervention by the United States in Mexico. However, the civil war goes on taking lives and destroying property and injuring foreign interests, the interests of the citizens of all the countries of the world.

The policy followed by the government of this country has not helped and will not help to pacify Mexico. As we have in other times said, we find the principle proclaimed by Mr. Wilson, that he would recognize only constitutional governments, very just and moral. But it is not practicable as long as the other nations do not accept it. It may be very useful in the future to prevent *coups d'etats,* dictatorships, military uprising and many of the revolutions, but it has not been able to prevent the conquences of accomplished facts. The mediation offered with that policy could not give any results, because the country that has conquered territory from another, is not the one that is called to intervene in any form or manner in its internal struggles. Both parties would reject the

proposition in fear that their cause would lose prestige by the mere fact either would appear as lending a willing ear to the proposals.

We believe it would have been successful, and even now might succeed, if the moral pressure were exerted by several powers of both continents simultaneously; and if this should fail also, and the nations should believe that the use of force was necessary, the United States should not consent to act alone in such an undertaking, even if the other powers should request this country to do so. If, unfortunately, the case should arise, and the intervention should be undertaken by an international army and navy, perhaps all resistance would disappear, and it would be reduced to a mere demonstration, because the Mexicans then would not fear the loss of a single foot of their territory and their national pride would not be greatly hurt by bowing before so many combined forces. The old Monroe Doctrine would not be an obstacle to that method of pacifying Mexico, because it would not be a matter of conquest, and already in several cases there have been disembarked forces of one or two nations combined with those of the United States, without having been considered as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine; and such course would clash still less with the more modern and ample principle proclaimed by President Wilson. Acting thus the legitimate and permanent welfare of this country would be identified with the cause of justice. Any other sort of welfare but the kind suggested would be temporary and misleading, the one that may be allied to iniquity.

CUBA.

Of this country we have very little to say. It was a Spanish colony. It fought for its freedom for many years; but notwithstanding the heroism of its sons, it could not conquer its freedom alone. It triumphed when it got the active help of the United States Army and Navy, that remained for a time in military occupancy of the island. This country could have taken possession of it as conquered territory, but it preferred to fulfill its promises to the Cuban insurgents, giving life to a nation, and

was satisfied with acquiring a naval station that will always be for Cuba its Gibraltar. Undoubtedly, absolute generosity would have been better, because it would have gained the gratitude of the Cubans without reserve. But in doing what it did as vanquisher of Spain, this country did not violate international law, although it did not fulfill the disinterested motives claimed as reason to make war on Spain. The complete generosity would have had besides for this country the advantage of suppressing in the American people the ambition for new conquests, that was awakened anew, creating since then what has been called imperialism or expansionism.

This country imposed other conditions before recognizing the Cuban republic that limit to a certain extent its sovereignty, but they were justified by special circumstances and on account of the responsibility assumed by this country in creating a new nation, to which it must give a solid foundation. For that reason this case must not be considered the same as that of the existing nations, that had become independent without foreign help. Taking this in consideration, the Cuban statesmen, whose patriotism is unquestionable, accepted the conditions without committing a treasonable act against a nation that did not exist.

Notwithstanding those limitations Cuba is in a better situation than Santo Domingo, because it does not suffer foreign intervention in its finances, that have reduced the latter country to the unfortunate condition we will refer to hereafter. Cuba is destined to be a free and prosperous nation, if the Cubans by good judgment place it in the way of acquiring in a near future the plentitude of its independent life, and if the Wilson doctrine is confirmed as an international doctrine for America.

PUERTO RICO.

This island passed from the domination of Spain to that of the United States. It was a colony; to-day it is in anomalous condition, without precedent in the history of International Law. It is not a nation, because it has not sovereignty. It is not a colony of the United States, and still less a Territory, although its government is

similar to this last political division, because the Porto Ricans do not enjoy American citizenship. Therefore the Porto Ricans have no country nor international status. The island is owned by the United States by right of conquest, as we said before. It is the country most thickly populated of America, and the third if compared with the other nations of the world. The race that inhabits the island is very homogeneous, Latin race, with little mixing of Indian or negro blood. It has a perfect right to form a nation at least like Cuba.

The democratic party of the United States has promised the independence of the Philippines, where a great number of the inhabitants are savages. And with more reason it should be given to a civilized people like that of Puerto Rico. In any case these islanders have a right to a definite position in the world, and they should acquire either their own citizenship or that of the United States. President Wilson who has proclaimed justice as rule for the acts of the government of his country, will do full justice to that people, ending its irregular condition.

COLOMBIA.

The Isthmus of Panama was an integral part of Colombian territory. A Treaty with the United States guaranteed its integrity, so as to prevent any other nation from trying to take possession of it. Panama proclaims its independence, having the promise of the United States to help it to sustain it. That promise was faithfully kept; and in exchange for recognition of the new republic, with a limited sovereignty like that of Cuba, it obtained the eminent domain of the canal zone. Colombia is compelled to-day to accept the irreparable fact. It cannot pretend that Panama shall become again part of Colombia, and still less that the United States should give up the canal zone and lose the hundreds of millions they have expended in the construction of the canal.

Colombia must forgive the daughter that left the maternal home to form her own; but it is not in the same condition towards the seducer that offended her deeply and caused her heavy damages. She has right to compensations besides those of a pecuniary character, to wit:

to enjoy the same advantages in the canal that the United States and Panama does. Hitherto the adjustment of that difficulty has been impossible. To-day we consider it very easy. The President of the United States professes the belief that, "the convenience of the country should never be placed above the laws of honor nor of justice."

SANTO DOMINGO.

We have referred before to the terrible situation in which this people finds itself, and whose original cause was a concession given to foreigners, American citizens, one of those concessions that President Wilson so mercilessly censures in his speech.

Santo Domingo, like many other Latin-American countries, had a foreign debt, whose payment was suspended, her resources being inadequate to meet it. It was one of the many cases in which the countries situated south of the Rio Grande, as inexperienced children, were defrauded by its bankers and agents in Europe.

The bondholders of the debt, that were at the time other than the original subscribers, representing persons that had speculated in them, were waiting patiently, like all the creditors of those countries, until the republic should be in a better condition. But certain American capitalists conceived a plan to settle the debt, and they succeeded in getting a concession from the Dominican Government to that end. By lack of ability, or through error, they made a losing business, or at least not as good as they expected. Up to that time no harm could result on account of the concession, because it was natural that the concessionists should suffer the consequences of their own acts; but to avoid the losses they conceived a noxious plan. They made the European bondholders have their governments present a menacing and pressing claim for payment to the Dominican Government. Whether the American Government helped the American capitalists in the undertaking we do not know for a certainty, but the fact was, that on account of that dangerous situation, created by themselves, the President of the United States imposed the economic protectorate to the Dominican Government, compelling it to deliver the collection of

customs to a foreign collector, that had to be appointed by the President of the United States, and the Custom House receipts were to be applied to the payment of the foreign debt in the form that was also imposed.

With this arrangement the Dominican Government was deprived of its principal source of revenue, and reduced to the internal revenues that do not produce enough for its budget expenses. As a consequence of it there is great public and private poverty, and constant warfare as the surest and easiest way to live, and war, after the establishment of the protectorate has been an endemic estate of the country, and there have been more scandals than ever, even to the extent of the assassination of several Presidents. That country has not enjoyed in exchange after suffering foreign intervention, of its economic ruin and of its poverty, any of the benefits of peace, not even the peace of the tombs. Many of the Presidents of that epoch in Santo Domingo have been accused of lack of honesty, of squandering the revenues that are left, and of incapacity to manage them; but there are abundant reasons to believe that even so, the principal cause of it is that the country has been overburdened in a grade superior to its economical force, with the payment of the debt in the form imposed upon it. Such is the logical consequence, as we have pointed out before, of any protectorate. As the protector has not any legal responsibility towards the Dominican people or the world, it can put the blame on the protected government.

But there has come for the Dominicans a day of boundless hope. President Wilson, without doubt, consequent with his promises to the Latin-American peoples, will establish a very severe inquiry on the conditions that the Dominican people is subjected to; and on discovering that it is due to the policy of preceding administrations, he will correct the injustice, and will deliver that people of its subordination not only to foreign interest, but to a foreign government, to which it is subservient at present. And as for every wrong suffered there should be some compensation, the Dominicans, on being freed from their actual degrading conditions, will be sensible, and remembering always the bitter lesson received, will resolve to

create a stable, honest and economical government that, living modestly, will meet without sacrifices all its obligations abroad, under a new and more equitable arrangement. To reach such an arrangement the help of President Wilson will be very useful, and he will lend it willingly. Thus will he settle the Dominican problem to the satisfaction of Anglo-Saxons and Latins.

CENTRAL AMERICA.

The countries that are compelled to give concessions to foreign capitalists, President Wilson says, are in such situation that it is possible for foreign interest to dominate their internal politics, a state of affairs that he considers dangerous and that often becomes intolerable; and he advises them to use their utmost efforts to become free from their subordination. And if he says so in reference to private foreign enterprises, with more reason and more severity condemns the concessions made to other foreign governments, because in this case the subordination means the loss of sovereignty.

This is the most energetic condemnation that he could make of Dollar Diplomacy, proclaimed and practiced by the Department of State under the former Administration over the Central American countries.

Any kind of intervention by the government of a country in the internal affairs of another is always harmful; but when both countries are of different races, have different languages and habits, and especially when the interventor is bigger, richer and more powerful than the other country, the one that suffers intervention feels at least humiliated, even if the intervention is of such a nature that it does not directly affect its independence or autonomy.

Nevertheless, this does not mean, that we do not recognize the benefits of the moral and civilizing influence of one country upon another, of the help that could be lent in cases of public calamity, or the fraternal mediation to end an international war or civil strife, on condition that it is offered and not imposed, and that the mediator should not feel offended if its mediation was rejected; because we are aware of the reciprocal duties of nations towards

each other in the cause of humanity, as the duty of individuals within the community in which they live.

It is on that account that we have been pleased by certain friendly acts accomplished by the American Government in cases of war between the Central American States. It is on that account that we approved the efforts made by this and the Mexican Governments to convene in Washington the representatives of the five republics of Central America, with the object of choosing the best and most practical means to insure peace between them. If that conference did not attain the desired results, it was not the fault of the mediators, since they left the plenipotentiaries of those nations in absolute freedom to do as they thought best. The United States Government's conduct in that case was absolutely disinterested, and we have made it a point always on every occasion to say so, as we were one of the representatives taking part in that conference. At that time was offered the radical remedy for the perturbed state of Central America: the re-establishment of the nation proclaimed by our forefathers, when they declared their independence, and it was rejected by a majority of votes; but as a gage of their good faith, the representatives of the two mediators did show, as far as their neutrality allowed them, their partiality in favor of that project. Another proof of their good faith was their attitude when it was proposed to annul the pact celebrated betweeen Guatemala, Salvador and Honduras, that designated as arbiters, supreme and permanently, for all their differences, the two mediator governments. That pact of arbitration was substituted by the establishment of the Central American Court of Justice, a resolution that was accepted with enthusiasm by the mediators. We did not place any faith in the success of that Court, and we said it at the time, as appears on the minutes of the meeting of the Conference. We accepted it because it represented a bare possibility of peace, and because the Court was a national tribunal that superseded an international tribunal. We did foresee then what happened afterwards, that the new tribunal would not fulfill the mission that was confided to it, because instead of a judicial tribunal it would be converted into a

political one. It was not through fault of the mediators but the natural consequence of the irregular, inconvenient, and dangerous situation in which those countries find themselves on account of their separation.

It was only enough a change in the personal of the Department of State to change radically the political leanings of this country towards those countries, establishing what has been known in the United States and abroad under the name of Dollar Diplomacy, to which we have already referred. That name was given to that policy because it was said that its purpose was to substitute bullets for dollars to obtain peace and progress in Central America. The idea was good, but the facts did not agree with it. Suppressing from that policy its attacks on the sovereignty of those countries, it would have been entirely successful, if the dollars really had been sent over there, because it is what we lack of, receiving in exchange our lands to cultivate them, our ways to construct railroads, our rivers for canalization, our ports for trading, and our sale in general to develop their industries and all kinds of business; because with better remuneration, the greater field for ambition and the change in the trend of their interests, the Central Americans would have become more addicted to peace; and because with the development of new and important enterprises, these countries would have received increased revenues, and their governments would have been in a position to pay honorably and without sacrifice all its financial obligations whether they were old or new. As a proof of our assertion we can point out, beside other examples, that of one of the Custom Houses of Honduras. In less than four years it has trebled its production, due to the distribution of money for labor and the agricultural development brought about by the construction of seventy miles of railroad.

Unluckily, in all the projects for the welfare of these countries that have been imposed on them, the dollars remained in the United States, and the only thing that should reach down there were the obligations that had to be converted into dollars to pay interest and sinking funds and salaries for foreign em-

ployees. That was splendid business for the bankers lucky enough to force its acceptation. And those negotiations were really forced on those governments, because the diplomatic or mercantile documents of agreement were presented already made, sometimes even printed beforehand, and, without permitting any discussion, the governments were warned that they must accept them without changing even a comma in them. They undoubtedly thought that there was not in Central America a single man capable of understanding the extent of such negotiations, or may be they were conscious that such proposals could not stand investigation by public opinion, because the most absolute secrecy was exacted about the negotiations, in Central America as well as here.

The first contract of that kind was offered to Costa Rica, although on better conditions for that country. Although it was also an usurious bargain, because "to destroy the risk, they exacted absolute guarantee," nothing less than a clause providing that in case of failure to fulfill the terms of the contract, the government of the United States would undertake to make effective the obligations of the country. The contract was accepted by the President of Costa Rica, but it was rejected by Congress, although it was ratified later with another concessionaire, leaving out the clause authorizing the intervention of a foreign government.

The President of Guatemala, with great diplomacy, delayed the negotiations for a long time without accepting or rejecting the proposal, until the peril was past on account of the change in the administration, and of the Secretary of State. In Honduras, the President tried the same methods employed in Guatemala, and he delayed the negotiations for nearly two years, but lacking ability and energy, he gave occasion to be fomented two revolutions, and when the second revolution threatened his downfall, he accepted and signed the convention imposed by the Department of State, preliminary to a loan of ten millions. But the Honduranean Congress rejected it and the President lost his office, although he was successful in preventing the revolutionary chief from succeeding him. The new President declared that he was not bound to ac-

cept the convention. The Secretary of State did not desist from its policy, but for the time being he did not try to force those governments to accept his propositions, because he could not get the American Senate to approve the Convention with Honduras, it being at the time shown that the Upper House was opposed to the policy of the Department. It was thus how the two countries were freed from these negotiations, that would have ruined them, as has been the case with another and more unlucky country with which we are to deal presently.

Nicaragua was the dissonant factor. With a perfect knowledge of the opposition of the American Senate, the government of that country signed and had ratified by the Nicaraguan Congress, that only in name represented the people, the convention and contract for a loan, practically the same as the one offered to Honduras, with only the difference in the amount of the loan, in this case $15,000,000, and other conditions and collateral business more usurious than all that had been proposed up to that time. But foreseeing that the American Senate would not ratify it, as it did not, and to force to a certain extent the opinion of the senators, presenting to them an accomplished fact, they celebrated a provisional contract for a short time loan for a million and a half of dollars, according to whose terms the moneys would not go to Nicaragua; and by virtue of that loan the custom houses of Nicaragua were put under the control of an American collector, and later on with another reason or pretext, all the other principal sources of revenue were put under the same control, leaving the government without any means to meet expenses, at the mercy of its creditors, and entirely subservient to a foreign group.

The immediate consequence of that state of affairs was, beside others, that the government needing some money, no matter how small the amount, the bankers agreed to furnish from the sums collected from the revenues, in exchange for an option on 51% of the ownership of the national railroads and steamers, for a price of a million of dollars. The management of the steamers and railroads to be assumed by them as an additional guaranty.

In the provisional pact there was provided the establishment of a National Bank, that would put in practice the plan recommended by foreign experts for the conversion of the depreciated paper money of the country for another paper issued by the Bank, representing gold. But there is a very peculiar stipulation in the contract; the depreciated bills, that the Bank would receive, would not he cancelled, they were to be deposited in the Bank as an additional guaranty, which means that in the very remote possibility of a loss, the Bank had the right to put them in circulation again. The Nicaraguan people with great reason, although acting only on impulse or instinct, has rejected the new Bank bills, refusing to place confidence in them, because they are considered as bad as the former bills. President Wilson has used very severe language in speaking and judging those negotiations that he characterizes as hard bargains, but we are sure that he has not paid very much attention to this point, because then his words would have seemed to him very mild.

There has been recently signed another contract, by which the New York Bankers use the option on the railroads and steamers, paying one million dollars for 51% of the shares of those enterprises, and taking another option for one million to the remaining 49%. But of that money, not a cent ever reached Nicaragua, because it was applied to cancel the balance of the former loan, to complete the guaranty of the monetary plan, and to subscribe 49% of the shares of the National Bank. As a compensation they made a new loan to the government with the same guaranties of the previous loan for a year. We do not know what has been done with that money. Although it were well spent, that is only a very transient help. When it becomes due the government will find itself in greater difficulties, as always happens after the moneys loaned are spent, when they are spent in a non-productive manner; and it is impossible to foresee how many and greater sacrifices that government will be compelled to make, to obtain new delays of payments or to renew the contract that it cannot fulfill. If there is not a radical change, there will be an interminable chain of difficulties and humiliations for the government and people of Nicaragua.

We suppose that President Wilson refers to that help when he says in his speech talking of his duty to help those countries to free themselves of the subordination to foreign interests, "I think some of these gentlemen have already had occasion to bear witness that the Department of State in recent months has tried to serve them in that wise".

But from his words we may infer that he has had no time to study carefully those negotiations, because had he possessed an intimate knowledge of the workings of said negotiations, as we have explained them, he would not have permitted that his name were linked with business that come under the scope that he calls hard bargains and neither would he consent, that for the sake of obtaining money, Nicaragua should be compelled to sell at a sacrifice, a property builded by the efforts of several generations, sold for less than half its value, something we are sure of, even if it were not true what is publicly said, that the bankers have already sold the railroad, realizing a profit of one hundred per cent.

We will not enter in the field of figures on the financial condition of Nicaragua, because from the time the revenues have been administered by foreign collectors, we have not seen published, neither in Nicaragua nor here, a single statement about the production or inversion of the revenues. The only well known fact is the emptiness of the National Treasury, such that never happened before even during the worst times of internal political strife.

Up to now, we have examined the intervention of the Department of State of the United States in Nicaragua, in reference to the finances of that country. Now we are going to study it under a political aspect, although we will have to refer occasionally to the financial question, because it has been the object and the soul of intervention.

In 1909 there existed in Nicaragua a government opposed to negotiations like those that have been lately carried out in that country. On the contrary it had just finished negotiations for a loan in England, obtaining more advantageous conditions than those offered by the

American bankers. A considerable part of that loan was destined to pay an American loan that was in force. For that reason it was decided to eliminate the President who had negotiated the English loan. There was a revolution that with the moral support of the Department of State, and with material help more or less disguised, triumphed in the end, after thousands of victims were sacrificed, and millions of dollars expended, the country suffering immense material loss.

As soon as the provisional government was inaugurated in the capital of the republic, there arrived an agent of the Department of State, to confer with the winning party, imposing on it a political agreement in regard to the succession to the Presidency, but at the same time it was a financial agreement because, among other things, they agreed to approve the convention and loan as we have explained before. That was the price asked for the help given to the revolution. Some misunderstandings appeared amongst the victorious revolutionists, the result of which was that the President at that time left the office, to be taken by the one who holds it now, thus making possible the remaining at the head of the War Department of General Luis Mena, who, until that moment, was the favorite of United States Department, as it was proved by the fact of having the American Minister interfered to realize such changes.

General Mena was elected President for the next presidential term, by the National Assembly. His election was just as legal or illegal as that the present incumbent, that was also elected by that Assembly. Neither the American Minister nor any of the members of the Nicaraguan government protested against his election. The only protest made at the time came from the party vanquished by the revolution, that asked why the election of President was not submitted to popular vote.

The American Minister forthwith approached General Mena, because he was in fact, the most important member of the government, asking him to use his influence to help the United States government to obtain an option to build a canal through Nicaragua, offering in exchange a miserly amount of money. General Mena

answered that he believed that it would be difficult to have such a proposition approved by the Nicaraguan Congress, but that he believed that if the American government paid fifteen million, a sum equal to the preferred loan, he believed the negotiation would be approved by Congress, as in that case there would be no need of the loan. The American Minister objected, saying that the sum was too high, and told General Mena that he dominated the majority of the Nicaraguan Congress, and that if he wanted the convention would be approved. The American Minister let it be clearly understood to General Mena that he was acting against his own interests. From that moment Mena's fate must have been sealed. He had to be eliminated, because the same American Minister afterwards was the one to ask Mena for his resignation as Minister of War, and as Commander of the Army, compelling him to leave the capital without offering any resistance. In reference to this and other negotiations carried by said American Minister, we have seen published in the press of Panama and Central America, documents of such a grave import that we prefer to abstain from commenting on them, leaving it to the American press and the American statesmen. What we say above it we know through having had occasion to read letters of General Mena relating the facts.

Mena did not submit himself to the imposition. He retired from the Capital to start a civil war, that we will not call rebellion, because his object was to prevent others from eliminating him as President-elect. And if either of the two could have been called legally President, it was he, because he counted before and during the war with the support of the Assembly, that had elected the present and the future President, deposed the first, and appointing a provisional president to fill the gap up to the time in which Mena should assume the presidency.

If Mena had only counted with the support of his partizans, the contending forces would have been equal; but his superiority was at once manifested, because the enemies of the party in power, declared themselves in his favor and his cause became very popular. He was nevertheless vanquished without a great struggle, because

there landed thousands of American marines to oppose him. These had the superiority of their armaments, their discipline, and above all the moral prestige of being soldiers of such a powerful nation. With all that they would have encountered the very stubborn resistance that the people offer when their rights are trampled under foot, and when they see their country invaded by foreign soldiers, if to vanquish the patriots they had not had resource to deceit. The intervention was accomplished by the American marines under pretext that the only object of their presence on Nicaraguan soil was to protect American citizens and American interest, including in this last class the national steamers and railroad, whose delivery they demanded. They promised to observe the strictest neutrality in the civil strife, and consequently they promised that both means of travel would not be used by either of the belligerents. But as soon as they had taken possession of the railroad stations and chosen and fortified the positions they considered advantageous for defense, as soon as they felt sure that they could dominate the cities where the patriots were camped, they intimated to General Mena, at Granada that he must not give arms and ammunition to more than five hundred volunteers that had gone from Leon on foot, covering more than one hundred miles to get those arms, and passing through the enemy's lines. After they succeeded in this, they ordered General Mena to dismantle the fortifications he occupied, to take away the artillery, and that his soldiers put their arms in pavillion under futile pretexts. After they were obeyed, they demanded the unconditional surrender of General Mena, and he had to submit, because he was seriously sick in bed, and because he was already disarmed. Thus they took possession of Granada, which city was delivered at once by them to the forces of the Diaz Government, taking General Mena as a prisoner to Ancon, where he remained in custody until he recovered his liberty when the new President of the United States ordered it.

The same tactics were employed at Masaya, where General Benjamin Zeledon was commander. His conduct will go down in history as a brilliant example for

patriots. When he received the intimation for surrender he gave an answer that we cannot resist the wish to quote, because it proves that President Wilson was not mistaken in recognizing the dignity, the courage, and the splendid character of Latin Americans, who deserve universal admiration. General Zeledon's answer was:

MASAYA, October 3, 1912.

To Colonel J. H. PENDLETON, In Camp.

SIR:—

I have received your note, dated yesterday, in which you inform me that the government of the United States has ordered that no disturbers be permitted to occupy positions which menace the railroad between Corinto and Granada; that, in consequence, you give me notice to evacuate all my positions on the Barranca, Coyotepe and in this city; that if I comply with this demand, I will make it known by flying in a position preferable visible from Coyotepe and the Barranca and other points, white flags; that forewith my troops should march towards your lines, near the station of Nindiri on the railroad line, where the arms should be deposited; that you will not receive any delegation or commission coming to ask other conditions of you than those indicated; that if your order is not complied with, today at exactly eight o'clock in the morning, the fire from your artillery will open up and drive me from my position.

I confess to you that I have read your above mentioned note, and I have been reluctant to believe that it is signed by one trained in military matters, who served under the flag of the Great American Nation, that prides itself on being the guiding spirit of the Democratic Republics of the American Continent; and my surprise increases still more when I consider it impossible that the Government of the United States of North America, and above all the Senate of the Country at Washington and of Lincoln, has authorized its servants to come and intervene with armed forces in the internal affairs that we Nicaraguans discuss in this land, which is ours, and bequeathed sovereign and independent to us by our fathers.

After serving protest in the matter, by virtue of what was determined upon by the majority of the patriots of this city and by the majority of the Generals under my Command, in spite of my opinion to the contrary, trains were permitted to pass through the midst of my position upon the railway line which leads to Granada, and from the date of the permission up to the present, trains have continued to pass with all guarantees on the part of my forces.

Having obtained then the passage of trains, I do not see even remotely the reason which you can give to your superiors for exacting the surrender of my position and a disarmament of my army; and consequently, I dare think that you will withdraw your threats in view of the justice which assists me. But if, unfortunately for the honor of the United States of North America, you and your Chiefs are deaf to the well founded reasons which I sight, and carry forward your threatened attack, your trains by that act itself will be considered as hostile instead of enjoying the guarantee which up to now they have been enjoying, I will make with my forces the resistance that the case requires, and that the dignity of Nicaragua which we represent demands, and afterwards, there will fall upon you, your chiefs and the mighty nation to which you belong, the tremendous responsibilities which history will set forth, and the eternal reproach of having employed your arms against the weak who have been fighting to conquer the sacred privileges of the fatherland.

I hope that you will dain to send me your answer before proceeding to attack my position, in order that I may know what action to take.

Respectfully,

B. F. Zeledon.

The battle commenced with a very heavy artillery fire which the American marines poured on the fortifications of the city of Masaya for twenty-four hours. The fortifications had been improvised by the defenders, and that fire was followed by an assault. There was a weak resistance, because the defenders lacked ammunition, specially for their artillery. The fighting continued in the square of the city with the help of President Diaz's forces, and after a few hours' fighting, Zeledon abandoned the city when his ammunition was exhausted. Zeledon was persecuted, and when they met him he was killed. How? The patriots declare that he was captured and assassinated, his enemies saying that he died as a result of the wounds received in a loyal fight. History will keep the name of that victim to honor it as it deserves, and it will clear the manner in which he was killed. Even with documents in our possession we do not want to make charges, because we are afraid to be blinded by admiration for that hero and indignation against those that were his executioners, at least because they were executioners of their country.

Leon as well as the other towns of the north, one after another, surrendered to the American marines, that at once turned them over to the Diaz government, all resistance being useless because of lack of arms and ammunition.

We have entered into all these details to justify the impression that must have caused in the American marines the role that they filled in that war. They must have reflected, that like the Swiss soldiers of former times, they were selling their blood, hiring their services, to sustain a tyrant against his own people, and to continue serving him as his own personal guard, to insure his safety. Loving their country as they do, they must have felt admiration for the Nicaraguans who defended their own, as well as contempt for those who urged them to kill their brothers; because, although they were soldiers, they had nevertheless the feelings of free citizens, of the free American nation.

We have found our judgment of the feelings of the American marines confirmed by unquestionable documents, that we hope to see published in the American press, such as the reports of the chiefs of the expeditionary forces, some of them we have been lucky to see. There they will find this declaration: "The present government of Nicaragua represents only a small minority of the people. Without the help of the American marines they could not have triumphed; without their presence in the country they could not remain in power."

We are sure that President Wilson and Secretary of State Bryan, have not seen the above mentioned documents and others we have referred to, because they are still sustaining the consequences of that intervention.

One of them was the contract for the Canal through Nicaragua, including other concessions. We have already said how the asking by General Mena of a price that the American Minister considered too high, provoked his downfall with the intervention of American marines; and consequently that transaction may be considered as the price paid for American help at that time, and it is not the only one if the diplomatic notes we have referred to, are authenticated. Those diplomatic notes have been published by the Latin American press, and

they have not been contradicted by any of the American representatives residing in the countries where they have been published. At another time we have examined at length the faults of that contract, and we will limit ourselves to comment on it in relation to President Wilson's declarations.

The President said: "The United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest." This signifies that, through that means they will not acquire anything that will affect or diminish the sovereignty of any other country. We want therefore to prove that the Nicaraguan contract affects in several ways the sovereignty of several Central American countries.

In the first place, the perpetual option to build a canal, deprives Nicaragua of the right to build it by herself in her own soil, because that right is given exclusively to a foreign government, and it would be a less serious problem, if it was really intended to accomplish the work, instead of preventing it, as is proved by a simple examination of the contract. There is no fixed date to begin nor for ending the work; there are no stipulations about the details of the work, leaving everything for future arrangements between the contracting parties, something that the concessionist would not do after paying three millions of dollars, if it had a real interest of using that concession, as the other party would be at liberty to prevent them from doing anything by interminable discussions of the final arrangements.

In the second place, the concession of naval bases on the Atlantic and the Pacific deprives Nicaragua of its eminent domain over the territory occupied by said naval bases, that would be under the domination of the foreign government.

In the third place, the canal route belongs also to Costa Rica, that has the right to intervene in all negotiations pertaining to the building of the canal, and to receive the proportional share, already agreed upon beforehand, of the price of the sale of the concession, according to the arbitral award given by President Cleveland; and that award the United States are more than any other country compelled to respect, because they cannot disregard it without violating all principles of absolute

justice as well as international justice and without discrediting the principle of arbitration, of which the United States have become the champions before the world.

And besides, the Gulf of Fonseca does not belong only to Nicaragua but also to El Salvador and Honduras, lying within their territories, and only a small part of it belongs to Nicaragua, and that part is useless for the purpose of a naval base. El Salvador has already protested. Honduras has kept silent, at least, we are not aware that its government has done anything to protect its rights. That silence is inexplicable and unjustifiable, but it can not serve to secure any rights, specially when the unanimous opposition of the people of that country to any negotiations on that subject is very well known.

To go ahead with that project would be to offend the sovereignty of those republics, it would be to risk their independence, because once the naval station is established and fortified, either its warships or merchant ships, and for that matter those of other nations, could not enter the gulf without the consent of the United States, that would dominate with the artillery of the forts and that of its warships the waters of the gulf. We do not want to bring here historical, geographical or legal arguments against the project, because they have been presented extensively to the Department of State by the Salvadorian Government; but from our point of view, we are satisfied with referring to the severe principles of President Wilson. The United States would never dare to use the rights obtained from one of the owners of a gulf like Fonseca's, if the other co-owners were two strong nations like England or Germany. That two weak nations like Salvador and Honduras are the co-owners in this case, will not alter President Wilson's opinion, because he has proclaimed the legal equality of all the nations in America; because he has offered them the friendship of the United States on the basis of equality and justice. President Wilson would not do to them what he would not want to be done to the United States.

Afterwards, by official declarations, published in the press of this country, we learned that there had been celebrated a new agreement under the original basis, with the

addition of a protectorate over Nicaragua under the form of something like the Platt amendment in Cuba; declaring the desire of extending it to all the nations in the neighborhood of the Panama Canal. The original agreement in regard to the canal was not known in Central America, and it was made public almost at the same time that the plan for a protectorate was. The news caused great alarm and indignation in the affected countries, and in all Latin-America. The Secretary of State, Mr. Bryan, gave a statement to the press, explaining the situation. He said that Nicaragua had asked for the protectorate, that it would not be imposed upon any of the other republics, but it would be conceded to those that would ask for it. He did not succeed in calming the anxiety of those countries, because they understood that it would be easy to create in their territories the same conditions that prevail in Nicaragua to compel their government to ask for the protectorate.

In Central America there existed another reason for anxiety. The Nicaraguan protectorate represented the death of the great and patriotic ideal of the reorganization of the original nationality; and Mr. Bryan, to set at rest that anxiety, declared that the Nicaraguan protectorate would not be an obstacle to the Central American Union, because the United States would always look with sympathy to the accomplishment of that project. This was not entirely satisfactory, because the protectorate represented a new obstacle added to those already existing, the necessity of obtaining the consent of a foreign power.

Therefore the news that the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Senate had rejected the clause of the protectorate over Nicaragua gave great satisfaction to Central America, and the speech of President Wilson in Mobile caused boundless joy, and the Latin American countries became calm again; because, as we have said before, they believe that it was premeditated, and they have faith that any project containing the slightest violence against those weak countries is incompatible with the principles proclaimed by the President, who will not bear injustice or that their rights should be ignored, whether they agreed or not with the convenience of this country,

although we believe that the true, legitimate interest of those countries and those of the United States will never disagree.

But unfortunately the rumor that there will be signed a new treaty embodying practically the same conditions of the preceding one, added to certain news published by the press of this country in a semi-official way, has provoked again agitation in those countries. It was said, for instance, that this government had retired the American Marines from all the countries where they had been landed except from Nicaragua, where they would remain until the convention for a protectorate had been ratified. It is impossible to make the multitude understand that such a course did not agree with the President's promises, but we believe that the news has no foundation. It is not possible that President Wilson will agree to gather the fruits of conquest. The State Department, and not the American people waged an unjust war, not against the government, but against the people of Nicaragua, and the results of that war must be considered illegal.

We want to answer beforehand the argument that such acquisitions have not been obtained by conquest because they have been given spontaneously by the Nicaraguan government. We do not believe that statesmen like Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan would descend to such a vulgar subterfuge to justify expoliation.

The Department of State knows better than any body else, that what exists in Nicaragua is not, and cannot be a government, because it has not means to exist, except what is given to it by the Department. That government has begged the Department to maintain in Nicaragua the marines that were landed there, confessing that without their presence it cannot exist. It agrees to everything that is asked by this government, in fact it anticipates the slightest desires of the Department, and sometimes offers and concedes what is not asked or desired. In one word, when the United States deal with that government they deal with themselves. President Wilson has refused to recognize as legitimate and constitutional the government of General Huerta in Mexico, notwithstanding the fact that it is sustained by, more or less, half the people

of Mexico, without the help of any foreign forces. With greater reason he must consider still more illegitimate and unconstitutional, the government that has confessed its lack of prestige and its impotency. During the past Administration they might have accepted the complicity of a few Nicaraguans to accomplish their purpose, at the same time applying the axiom of Napoleon I: "I take advantage of treason but I despise traitors." We are sure that President Wilson with his severe moral principles will say: "I reject treason with as much energy as I despise the traitors."

Even without those considerations, in case a legal government representing really the majority of the Nicaraguan people should have agreed to the concessions, these would always be the fruits of a conquest of the kind President Wilson said the United States would not seek, the same as are considered.

Alsace, Loraine, Philippines and Puerto Rico, notwithstanding those territories have been transferred in the Peace Treaties by the legitimate governments of the defeated nations to the victors.

History teaches us that Rome, when its covetousness pointed out a nation to be conquered, endeavored always first, to stir civil war in that country, then she let herself be called by one of the contending factions, then intervened, and the unlucky country was converted in a Roman province. By the description of events the case is similar to that of Nicaragua; but neither Secretary Bryan nor President Wilson can accept, nor the American Senate ratify, nor the American people consent, that there should be renewed in their country the former punic faith, in its international relations, specially towards the weak nations.

Seeking justice, and at the same time the real convenience of this country, President Wilson needs not force the southern countries to obtain everything that he may wish for as a good American Patriot. We are convinced, that not only the governments but the peoples of Central America would willingly contribute to insure the legitimate interest of the United States in this continent, conciliating them with their own interests.

Regarding the Nicaragua Canal. What is it the United States seek in the convention they are trying to enter into with that country? To prevent any rival power from using it as a strategic base in case of war? They would be sufficiently protected against that risk, if Nicaragua and Costa Rica should agree not to allow the construction of the canal to any nation outside of this continent. If it was argued that the United States need to insure the financial success of the Panama Canal, although that kind of reason is never taken into account by powerful nations, because competition is a law of humanity, the Central American Republics being sure that in fifty years they cannot develop their resources and credit to be able to accomplish that work, would not hurt their interests by giving to the United States the option they ask for that period of time, and at its expiration the above referred pact would be still in force. In fifty years this country would be sufficiently compensated for the money inverted in the Panama Canal.

Why does the United States seek a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca? To protect the Panama Canal it does not need it, because she has enough with the naval base at the isthmus. It might be argued that it is to prevent other nations from getting it; but to avoid that danger it is easy to enter into an agreement with not only Nicaragua but all the other Central American nations, obtaining a greater and better guarantee. Those countries we are sure would willingly obligate themselves not to give any concession to a foreign government for a naval base, at any point in their coasts, in the Atlantic as well as in the Pacific. They may argue further that there remains the danger of having a stronger nation taking possession of the gulf by force, but the United States would have the right to prevent it by virtue of the rights acquired in the treaty we suggest. And as such a thing could only happen in case of war between the United States and another naval power, they could guard against that occupation by reason of their proximity, or they could destroy the enemy within the gulf, just as well as in the high seas.

Besides to absolutely prevent such danger the United States would have to capture and fortify all the bays

and ports from Mexico down to Ecuador in the Pacific coast and down to Venezuela in the Atlantic side, and remove from the Caribbean Sea all the nations that have colonies there. As all this is impossible, the acquisition of the naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca would be of little value for the purpose, and they would not have the proper compensation for that unjust act, and the alarm and anxiety caused in the countries near to the Panama Canal.

If the United States wants its merchant marine to enjoy the same privileges as that of Nicaragua, they can obtain that concession from the Central American Republics, by giving them reciprocal advantages. This reciprocity clause always appears in all treaties of peace, commerce and navigation. Although sometimes the stipulations may appear ridiculous at first sight, because one of the contracting parties cannot enjoy the privileges granted by those treaties, they are nevertheless just because those treaties prepare the way in view of a better future, and said clauses recognize the equality of the contracting nations.

All this can be obtained without trouble, we are sure, by the United States, showing their respect to justice and towards the sovereignty of the Central American Countries, eliminating scandal and violence, and we are confident that President Wilson will reject all previous undertakings. And to seek another way, he will correct the unjust acts committed up to the present time towards the Nicaraguan people, helping it to free itself from subordination to foreign interest, and to establish constitutional government.

In his last message to Congress President Wilson said: "We are the friends of constitutional government in America, we are more than its friend, we are its champion, because in no other way can our neighbors, to whom we most prove our friendship, work for the development of their country in peace and liberty." This solemn declaration, changes in a radical manner, the policy of this government towards the rest of America. Before, it had been a rule of this government, to be the friend, almost the ally, of any government, by the mere fact that it was

government, without inquiring its legal right. Any popular uprising was condemned, even if it was provoked by a tirant, a violator of the constitution, an usurper, or even if it was the result of a crime. That declaration of President Wilson shows that in declaring himself the friend of constitutional government, he declared himself the friend of the people and not of the persons that govern.

That declaration has another meaning of great importance. If President Wilson considers that those peoples deserve constitutional government, the belief prevailing in this country that they can only be governed with an iron hand, will be gradually discredited. We suspect that said belief had its origin, in the high opinion entertained in this country over General Porfirio Diaz, who governed Mexico in peace for more than thirty years. They saw the marvelous development in that country of commerce, agriculture and industry under his rule, how thousands of millions of dollars of foreign capital were invested in the country, and the material progress attained, and the country crossed in all directions by railroads and telegraph lines. But they see to-day that beautiful fabric was destroyed because it lacked base, the base of constitutional government. A dictatorship cannot give birth to liberty. The Mexican people was not prepared for it, and to-day we see Mexico on the brink of a precipice, beset by the most horrible anarchy. Dictatorship can be justified only during limited periods and under extraordinary circumstances.

In other Latin American countries, General Porfirio Diaz was imitated by persons that copied his defects and not his good traits. Unfortunately good many have been incited to do that by the chorus of praise given in this country to the iron hand. All of them pretended to possess that iron hand, consequently there has not been a lack of it, and notwithstanding that fact, they have not made happy the countries ruled by them. They have not given them peace even, because the iron hand has always been the most potent cause of revolution.

We do not believe that people in this country realize what the iron hand means to those that use it, and we

are sure that if it was well understood what, the American statemen and the American press would never recommend a system that turns into slaves all the inhabitants of the country, and has never produced citizens and never will, because the iron hand means down there the following: An absolute and personal rule; the right of the ruler to do as he pleases, to deprive of life, liberty and property whomsoever they dislike; to convert public treasury in their private treasure. Liberty of the press is converted into a hollow mockery, because they only allow to print praises and flattery of the ruler. Political meetings are forbidden, except to praise the ruler and make him protest of adherence; and there is only one law, the will of the ruler, who never complies with the laws he despises. In fact that system is the same practised by the chiefs of savage tribes, disguised with the false glittering gold of civilized methods. And in the end the iron hand is found to be weak. While it is sustained by power it destroys men from the highest intellectual ranks to the lowest elements of society, and those that practice it, when they feel that they are losing power, regularly conduct themselves as arrant cowards.

In our opinion, the iron hand, to better express it the steel hand, is necessary to conduct constitutional government. In establishing that system, that has as a basis compliance of the law, the man who governs must begin by applying the steel hand to himself, to contain his own tendency to carry out his own will; it has to be applied to his friends and partisans, always creating more difficulties than his enemies, to maintain them within the rules; the steel hand is needed to convince the masses of the people that the ruler is not almighty, and teach them that they must not expect favors but justice; it has to be applied also to maintain constitutional guaranties, and to seek that the citizen use and not abuse their individual rights, without employing to suppress the abuse other means than the judiciary.

Speaking of constitutional government, we do not understand that it means the one based in the most advanced and liberal laws, but the one based in the institutions of the country whatever they are. If it is believed

that the country is not prepared to enjoy all rights and guaranties accepted to-day as absolute rights of mankind, the party upholding that opinion should work to have introduced in the constitution all the restrictions considered necessary; but as long as it is in power let it comply loyally with the laws, and never proceed in an arbitrary way.

Let the opposing party work to obtain the rights and guaranties as far as they are practicable, and if it gets in power, let it comply with the laws, no matter how bad they seem to be, as long as they are not modified by due process of the law.

That kind of governments are the ones that President Wilson wishes to see established in America. The influence that the government and people of the United States may exert to establish them, is great; and to prove that they sincerely wish it, they must begin by using their paramount influence in Nicaragua, converting it from harm as it is at present beneficial to the Nicaraguan people. They must subsitute the mockery of government existing there to-day with another government product of the will of the majority of the Nicaraguan people through a free election.

We do not care whether the government resulting from that election is liberal or conservative, because we have carefully avoided to get mixed in the internal politics of Central America, even in Honduras, our own country. It is on that account that even if we have been severe in our judgment about the present government of Nicaragua, we have not attacked its internal politics, but its work to jeopardize the most vital interests of the country, subjugating it, and selling it to a foreign government for the sake of keeping in power. We have faith that the sale of a free country will not be consummated, that the actual government of Nicaragua will disappear, leaving its place to another that will be really constitutional.

When this is accomplished the fear and lack of confidence in the United States will disappear in the southern countries, and they will look up to them with infinite hope and confidence, because they will be convinced that under the severe sight of their government and under the

wise censure of their press, instead of the help which has heretofore received, the dictators will gradually disappear by the pacific efforts of patriotism, that will work for the development of constitutional liberty within the great family of American nations.

CONCLUSION.

We have written this article, like all the others we have produced in favor of our country, by our own initiative. We have lived three years in this country, we admired since we were children, enjoying full guarantees, that were denied us in our own country during the last fifteen years. We hope with all our heart to establish here our home, so as to educate our children under the influence of modern liberty and progress, but those hopes would be shattered, if it should happen that we were compelled to consider this country as an enemy of our own. And for that reason, it is to a certain extent, with an egotistical object in view, that we are so interested to make clear the real situation, so as to avoid, as far as possible, that the American statesmen for lack of sufficient knowledge of the character, habits, virtues and defects, ideals and aspirations of the southern countries, may incur in error or insist in those already committed, in the relations of the United States with those countries, hurting the national feeling, felt there as much as in this country. We wish to see the races that inhabit this continent march fraternally united to the realization of their respective destinies.

While we were engaged in this work, we received from the Central American Patriotic League, the appointment as their representative, to defend their cause before the American people and government. This association was organized in El Salvador, and has extended to all the Central American Republics. Its creation was due to the alarm felt on account of the project of a protectorate and others affecting the autonomy of those countries. The honor that they have conferred upon us has a special importance, because it means that our past labors in favor of continental harmony have been approved in those coun-

tries, and it urges us to continue our work with greater confidence. Our words might not express the ideas and sentiments of some of the governments of Central America, but we have been sure, and now still more so, that we have expressed what those people think and feel.

We feel now authorized to add to our small personal authority, the force of the representation confided to us, in declaring that in this writing President Wilson will, find the answer to the program made public in his speech. That answer is given by the thought and heart of Central America; and we believe that we are not extralimiting ourselves if we affirm also that it is the answer given by the thought and heart of all America.

New York, February, 1914.

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